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ABSTRACT

Summaries of current research on aspects of urban and minority education are compiled in these fact sheets. The first report provides guidelines for counseling in a multicultural educational setting, and outlines what counselors should know about and what they can do for students of culturally different backgrounds. The second report, which examines desegregation as an equal educational opportunity strategy for Hispanics, presents a picture of poor Hispanic achievement under present schooling conditions, enumerates the disadvantages of segregated schooling for Hispanics, and presents some favorable outcomes of desegregation for Hispanic students. A third report explores issues related to the provision of bilingual education under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, discusses characteristics of bilingual education programs, and describes the effects of these programs on students. The fourth report focuses on the characteristics of high risk secondary school students, discusses skill areas that they need to develop, and examines instructional methods that have proven effective with such students. The final report examines the problems of misplacing minority students in special education classes and explores alternatives in testing and assessment to eliminate biases that have sent disproportionate numbers of minorities into such classes. (Author/MJL)

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COMPACT GUIDES TO INFORMATION ON URBAN AND MINORITY EDUCATION

Volume III

by

Carol Ascher, Ph.D.

July 1982

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
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CONTENTS

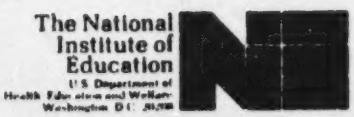
Counseling in a Multicultural Educational Setting (Fact Sheet 9)

Desegregation as an Equal Opportunity Education Strategy for Hispanics (Fact Sheet 10)

Issues in ESEA Title VII Bilingual Education (Fact Sheet 11)

The High-Risk Secondary Student and Experiential, Competency-Based Education (Fact Sheet 12)

Developing Non-Biased Criteria for Mainstreaming Minority Students (Fact Sheet 13)



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ERIC/CUE Fact Sheet Number 9

February 1982

Counseling in a Multicultural Educational Setting

The recent arrival of Southeast Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American refugees highlights once again the problems of counseling in a multicultural society. Though new foreign students are expected to be—and are accepted as— different, too often we assume that our own poor and ethnic students should not differ culturally from the "mainstream." Traditional counseling has a cultural bias which favors white, middle-class students, and which works against providing access to services, education, and employment to poor and minority students. Tests are more likely to result in the latter being considered "deviant" or "deficient" than in their being seen as members of a legitimate culture with alternate strengths. In 1973, an American Psychological Association Conference declared that, "offering services to persons of culturally diverse backgrounds by persons not competent in understanding such groups is unethical" (12).*

As immigration to this country continues and minority populations keep growing, sensitivity to cultural differences will become increasingly important to school counseling. Much of what we know of cross-cultural counseling at this stage comes from individuals who have worked with foreign students visiting American schools; work on counseling our own culturally different students is largely in its early stages. Though there are different views about what constitutes either personal competence or unbiased techniques, the literature offers some interesting insights.

How much do counselors have to know about their clients' as well as their own cultural background in order to act in an ethical and effective manner?

Answers to this question vary, depending partly on the work experience of the authors. At one end are those who stress the arrogance or racism implied in the idea that one can accept people of another culture without knowing anything about their background (8). This emphasis on knowing the specifics of the students' culture is generally expressed by individuals representing or working with a single culture, such as American Blacks or Chicanos. Those writing from experience with a variety of foreign students, or in a multicultural environment, tend to argue that counselors can't know the culture of each student, and so must be sensitized to general issues, such as their own and their clients' cultural values and assumptions (2,3,5). Nine-Curt (11) outlines five cultural principles that should be used by counselors and other school personnel:

- They should be aware of and accept their own ethnic, historical, and cultural background, and the ethnic, historical and cultural background of others.
- They should be sensitive to their own particular communication behavior and the communication behavior of others.
- They must learn the skill of switching cultural channels to establish an acceptable, nonoffensive, productive relationship with students of other cultures.
- They should be open to communication systems they may not have noticed before.
- They should practice one-to-one, culturally specific personal relations with each student.

A number of authors stress the importance of the counselor's openness to new ways of thinking and behaving. Russell (14) suggests the regimen of "unlearning something every day."

What are some sources of resistance to counseling by culturally different students?

Resistance may stem from values in the students' culture as well as the students' perceptions of the role of counseling.

- Some cultures believe that the way to deal with problems is to accept them as a normal part of reality.
- Coping with difficulties has a high value in some cultures.
- Suspicions about the host culture may cause more anxiety than dealing with the problems alone or with peers. (This is true, for example, among Black or Hispanic students, who may see counseling as an arm of a repressive, uncaring system.)
- Students may fear losing their cultural integrity, and their expectations about counselor's role may be unclear.
- There is a general anxiety about self-disclosure among peoples who have been treated harshly by their society.
- Many culturally different students have discovered indigenous modes of treatment which not only work better for them, but may be usefully applied to other groups as well (2,12).

Within a counseling relationship, what may one expect?

Culture, including language, affect nonverbal and verbal narrations, assertions, questions, feelings, gesture, intonation, judgment, initiative, posture, and listening behavior (12). Culturally different students will present different symptoms as well as concerns to the counselor. They may try to establish different kinds of relationships with the counselor (5). They will also tend to have different styles of presentation, often determined by a kind of personal aesthetics (9,17).

What is the effect of the race of the counselor on the counseling relationship?

Though there is relatively scant evidence, answers to this question appear to vary, depending on the group of students addressed. LeVine and Franco (6) write that Anglo and Hispanic students feel equally comfortable with Anglo and Hispanic counselors, although the self-disclosure patterns may differ with the ethnicity and gender of the counselor. The literature on counseling Black students, which is more abundant, is also incon-

*Numbers in parentheses indicate references.

clusive. Using experimental data, Peters and Slaughter (13) conclude that the race of the counselor does not determine whether a Black student perceives the relationship as effective. On the other side, Fry et al. (4) find racial similarity affecting students' responses; and Bryson and Bardo (1) suggest that it may be even more important to success than the counselor's experience. In a more literary vein, Smith (15) argues that Black counselors are necessary both because they are part of the Black heritage, and because they can use Black consciousness and sensitivity to oppression in order to work towards equity.

Because of the importance of language and values, there is evidence that Hispanic or Asian counselors should be provided to students of these groups, even when the issue of race itself may not directly apply (5,7,16).

What specifically can counselors do for culturally different students?

Students from other cultures—whether they are refugees, immigrants, children of migrant workers, or the urban ethnic poor—suffer from tendencies toward withdrawal and defeatism. Counselors can:

- Reach out to the "psychological dropouts" and the bilingual illiterate.
- Work with parents to help them become involved.
- Through sensitivity, correct problems in placement due to biased IQ and other tests.
- Focus on anxiety, low self-esteem, and other symptoms resulting from culture conflicts as well as an oppressive school system and society.
- Work flexibly: alternate groups and other imaginative forms of counseling with individual work.
- Create training programs that address cultural and experiential differences between counselors and students.
- Help to expand the number of bilingual and minority counselors (10,18).

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Desegregation as an Equal Educational Opportunity Strategy for Hispanics

A Brief History

Though no state legally segregated Hispanic children, as was the case with Blacks, isolation of Mexican Americans through districting and other devices existed without contest throughout the Southwest until the 1940s. The 1946 case of the *Westminster School District* et al. vs. *Mendez* et al. paved the way for *Brown* and other desegregation decisions of the 1950s. In this earlier case, a group of Mexican-American parents sued four Southern California elementary school districts for maintaining separate facilities and thus discriminating illegally against Mexican-American children (3)*.

Puerto Ricans began coming to the mainland in large numbers in the late 1940s, and by the mid 1960s, in such cities like New York, were being educated in largely segregated schools (12).

The *Brown* decision of 1954, which argued that separate facilities could not provide equal educational opportunity for Black students, had no direct effect on schooling for Hispanics. In fact, between 1954 and 1970, neither the courts nor the executive branch seriously attacked the segregation of Spanish-surnamed students. For several years, for example, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was scarcely used to protect these pupils. Indeed, many school districts sought to comply with desegregation orders by claiming Chicanos were legally white and sending them to schools with Black students. Thus a school with predominantly Black and Hispanic students was considered integrated; at the same time Anglo students were still allowed to attend largely segregated schools (9).

Between 1970 and 1974, court cases established a number of important guidelines for desegregation. Among them was *Keyes* v. *Denver* (1973), which held that bilingual education was not sufficient justification for the segregation of children, and that Blacks and Hispanics "suffer identical discrimination when compared with the treatment afforded Anglo students" (12:287). In a lower court ruling it was maintained that, though bilingual programs should continue, a Black-Hispanic school could no longer be called desegregated (9,12).

Yet legal precedent was clearly not led to enforcement. A 1980 Aspira report indicates that between 1968 and 1976, in 46 school districts having a high percentage of students called Hispanic, enrollments of Hispanics increased while total enrollments decreased (1). Thus the racial isolation of Hispanics rose in this period. A nationwide study confirms that, "The segregation of Latino students continued to increase in the 1970s in all regions of the nation" (4). The Aspira report also notes that Hispanic neighborhoods are as segregated now as they were 30 years ago. Given these facts and the decline of interest in busing, predictions for the desegregation of Hispanics in the near future are not optimistic.

What can we say about Hispanic achievement under the present conditions of schooling?

- In a 1980 study of high school achievement, average scores on mathematics, reading, and vocabulary tests for Hispanics were midway between those of Blacks and Anglos. Among Hispanic subgroups, Cubans had the highest scores on all three tests; they also tended to come from families of the highest education and income levels of all Hispanic groups (11).
- Hispanic students tend to be held back in the early grades of school and to drop out in the later grades, much more frequently than Anglos (2,6,8).
- Hispanics in the high school achievement study generally had lower educational aspirations than either Blacks or Anglos, when aspiration was determined by the expectation of achieving at least a college degree. Cubans were an exception, with the highest level of aspiration of all groups (11).
- Hispanic students participate in fewer extracurricular activities than Anglos (4).
- Fewer Hispanics graduate from high school than Anglos; fewer attend college, and still fewer graduate. There are scarcely any Hispanics in the graduate or professional schools (6,8).

What are some of the hazards of segregated schooling for Hispanics?

- Schools with many Hispanics have a disproportionate percentage of poorly prepared teachers (1).
- Predominantly Chicano and Puerto Rican classes are larger than Anglo classes (1).
- Predominantly Hispanic schools tend to be housed in school buildings of lower quality with poorer facilities and less adequate supplies (1).
- A study of Mexican-American education in Texas re-

*Numbers in parentheses indicates references.

vealed that, under conditions of segregated schooling, the amount of money spent to educate Chicano students is three-fifths of what is spent for Anglo pupils (5).

What can we say about the effects of desegregation on Hispanic students?

There are very few studies of Hispanic desegregation, and almost none on the desegregation of Puerto Rican children. Moreover, existing studies are largely short term and follow only one school or district. To make the findings still more questionable, the studies document school but not classroom desegregation, and so ignore important sources of continuing segregation, such as tracking, bilingual education programs, and other special curricula.

- Much of the argument for Hispanic desegregation draws on the general finding that minority children are helped academically by being in school with White, middle-class children (1).
- In San Francisco, a year after court-ordered desegregation, the reading and math achievement gains of Spanish-speaking students exceeded those of Blacks, but both groups gained considerably less than Whites (12).
- A longitudinal study of bused Hispanic and Black students in Riverside, California, suggests that those pupils who were desegregated at an early grade did not experience the increasing deficit of segregated students (7).
- One study of 1,681 Mexican-American junior high school students found that their achievement was directly related to the percentage of Anglos in the school. In this study the importance of desegregation was only exceeded by parental factors (10).
- On the other side, another study found no hard evidence for the positive effects of desegregation on Hispanic achievement and pointed out that bilingual-bicultural education programs are most commonly found in segregated schools (4).

Do Hispanics want integration?

Polls across the nation have indicated that Hispanics see integration more positively than do Anglos, though often somewhat less positively than do Blacks. Hispanics have also shown more willingness than Whites to endure sacrifices, such as busing, to achieve desegregation (11). Moreover, Hispanic students generally support busing and desegregation to a greater degree than their parents (1).

There is some indication that Mexican Americans may value integration more than Puerto Ricans, many of whom believe strongly in neighborhood schools regardless of their ethnic composition (11). But there are also anti-busing and neighborhood-school supporters among the Mexican-American population (4).

Chicano and Puerto Rican resistance to desegregation may be partly defensive, and partly caused by a lack of proven results. But it may also be an awareness of the potential loss and diffusion of power resulting from desegregation (1).

Among both Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, confidence in desegregation is heightened when the schools offer bilingual-bicultural programs (12).

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Issues in ESEA Title VII Bilingual Education

A Brief History

In 1968, when Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act into law, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Hispanic minorities constituted increasingly large, poor, and working-class groups within the school systems of such major cities as Los Angeles, New York, San Antonio, and Miami. Although the Act was targeted generally at those "from environments where the dominant language is other than English," by the time it was signed into law as an amendment (Title VII) to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, it legally mandated a focus on economically disadvantaged, language-minority students (8).* The Act allowed wide latitude in the projects to be tried. To a small extent, it emphasized bicultural education, and it could also be used to finance "efforts to establish closer cooperation between the school and the home" (7). But the main stress was on language instruction as a tool to solve the educational problems of these students.

Bilingual education became an equal educational opportunity strategy in the May 1970 memorandum, "Discrimination and Denial Due to National Origin," issued by the Office of Civil Rights. According to the memorandum:

> Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students (OCR Memorandum of May 25, 1970).

This OCR memorandum was largely ignored until 1974, when a Chinese-American parent named Lau sued the city of San Francisco for discriminating on the basis of national origin and depriving his and 1,800 other Chinese children of equal educational opportunity. The case reached the Supreme Court, which argued in favor of Lau:

> . . . there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education (Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. at 566).

With this decision, virtually all school districts with more than 5 percent non-English dominant students were put on notice for violating Federal law if they did not comply with the OCR memorandum of 1970. However, there was relatively little background information on either the learning characteristics of language-minority children or what might be appropriate programming in bilingual education.

What kinds of students should be given a bilingual education?

The answer to this question depends on definition and point of view (7,8). As narrowly defined by the legislation, a bilingual education should be given only to those who have limited English proficiency. In 1978, an estimated 2.4 million children between 5 and 14 had limited English proficiency. Of these, 1.7 million were of Spanish language background, and .7 million of all other language-minority backgrounds, including Russian, Greek, Italian, Chinese, and a growing number of language groups from Southeast Asia (14).

More broadly, a purpose of bilingual education has been defined as enhancing self-esteem and offering reparations for the stigmatization and loss of a minority language and culture (8,13). Following this point of view would lead to providing bilingual education to 5 million school age children who have native tongues other than English, or live in households in which a language other than English is

*Numbers in parentheses indicate references.

spoken (14). Or, widening the net still more, it would lead to including any child of a minority language and culture (2,13).

Most broadly, a small group of educators and activists have suggested that Anglo, middle-class students ought to be involved in reciprocal language learning with language-minority students (8). In addition to offering these Anglo students a greater cultural enrichment, such a plan would decrease the likelihood of segregation for limited-English-proficient students from poverty backgrounds, and thus the stigma which is often associated with bilingual education programs.

What do we know about bilingual learning?

Though 52 percent of all Title VII bilingual programs are said to begin instruction in both the native and second languages (15), the research on bilingual learning does not indicate that this is definitely the best method (6,7). In fact, several studies emphasize the importance for cognitive development of a child's first learning in his or her native language before the second language is introduced (5,7,8,11). The point has also been made that language learning for minority students is often complicated by the debilitating effects of a lower social class (7,8).

What are the characteristics of bilingual education programs?

What can be said above all is that there is no single, universally acknowledged design for bilingual education programs.

A number of educators and activists have argued for the importance of *maintenance bilingual education*. At a minimum, this would ensure the child's ability to speak in both languages, and at a maximum to read and write in both. Beyond this, a common ideal has also been of a truly bilingual-bicultural education in consonance with the child's culture of origin. However, the influence of legislation and court decisions, as well as public fear that a truly bilingual populace might create a high level of cultural pluralism has led to bilingual education being narrowly defined as "a method for replacing in non-English speaking children one language with another" (2). As a result, most programs are *transitional bilingual education*, and in some schools funding has been granted for *English as a second language* (ESL) or even *structured immersion* (students taught in English through a curriculum ordered so that no prior knowledge of the language is necessary (1).

Narrowly defined bilingual education has spawned several problems: the remedial/compensatory emphasis has tended to turn it into a program for underachieving, economically disadvantaged children, thus making it unattractive to middle-class children who are native English speakers. Poor, language-minority groups, for whom the programs are designed, are also often quite ambivalent about them because of their compensatory stigma (7). Some programs have become the "property" of community minority groups, and so have had to face the political opposition of those fearing cultural pluralism. For the most part, however, the transitional nature of bilingual education prohibits these programs from promoting the broader, more sustained goals of cultural and linguistic pluralism (2,4,7,13).

As for the concrete components of bilingual education programs, the following summary indicates their variety:

Range Programs use the students' native language in one or more of the following subjects: reading, arithmetic, culture, social studies, natural science, art, and music (3).

Age Most programs have been directed at the elementary years, particularly from kindergarten through the sixth grade, although some extend as far as high school (2,3,10).

Time As little as five minutes a day, three times a week is spent on a student's native language in a bilingual education program. On the other hand, as much as the majority of the school day may be spent in instruction in the student's native language (3).

Staff According to a national survey, there were 6,000 qualified and 34,000 partially qualified bilingual education teachers in 1976. The number of qualified teachers rose to 12,000 in 1980 (14). But these statistics tend to underemphasize the lack of preparation of even "qualified" bilingual education teachers. In one community, teachers were certified for proficiency in the language other than English if they knew a mere 750 words. Another study found that in a major city with extensive enrollment in bilingual education, 92 percent of the staff in the programs were monolingual in English (7). Still, efforts are now being made to improve teacher training and raise the standards for certification.

Materials Though there are a variety of bilingual materials, they are largely piecemeal. For languages other than Spanish there is no comprehensive, consecutive curriculum for elementary school. The incompleteness of these materials, however, has been only part of the problem: support materials, such as visual aids, are only beginning to be produced in bilingual education (3,10).

Methodology Methods for teaching either languages other than English or English in the context of bilingual education are being developed in universities and training institutions, but it has been difficult until now to get them into the classroom (3,10).

Testing Instruments to determine language ability and educational achievement in languages other than English are just beginning to be developed, and many are time-consuming and rarely used. Since Lau, many students have been admitted to bilingual programs on the basis of these developing assessment procedures, although some continue to be admitted on the basis of their surnames or the language they speak among their peers, or other evidence

which does not necessarily measure their English proficiency (7,10).

How does bilingual education dovetail with desegregation, another equal educational opportunity strategy?

Though bilingual education as it has generally come to be instituted separates out non-English proficient and other minority students, the law has deemed that it is not a substitute for desegregation (7). It has been argued that one of the benefits of transitional bilingual education is that it isolates students for a shorter period of time than maintenance bilingual education (7). However, it has also been maintained that with proper administrative planning, bilingual education and desegregation need not conflict (2). The Lau Centers were established throughout the country in 1974 to provide assistance in working out the balance of bilingual education and desegregation. These centers also help districts develop the technical skills for assessing non-English dominant students, teaching them, communicating with their parents, and evaluating the bilingual education programs.

What do evaluations of bilingual education tell us about the effects of these programs on their students?

In addition to the problem of what exactly we are talking about when we speak about bilingual education, there is the problem of the research itself. Of the half billion dollars spent on bilingual education between 1968 and 1978, less than .5 percent was spent on research (15). Moreover, because of a lack of research funds, information on bilingual education programs comes largely from doctoral dissertations and program evaluations—most of the latter being methodologically nearly worthless (1,7,15). One major survey of bilingual education found only 15 studies out of 180 methodologically reliable enough for use (16). Another more recent survey eliminated all but 28 studies out of an initial sample of several hundred (1). The major problems of existing studies include no control for socioeconomic status, inadequate sample size or excessive attrition, lack of baseline comparison data or controls, and significant differences in teacher qualifications or other confounding variables (15). Though English is often used much more than would be called for by the specific program, no research documents this fact (15). At another level, the surveys of studies have themselves been criticized for their methodology; one, for example, is charged with assuming that all language-minority groups have the same needs, that all districts are the same and thus comparable, and that the professed methods of different programs are distinct and fully implemented (12).

Given the range of what can be meant by a bilingual education or an English-deficient student, combined with the wide variety of actual programming and the weakness of the research (8,9), one risks being misleading when even trying to summarize what the research says about this highly controversial subject. Not surprisingly, three recent, major evaluative surveys do not come to the same conclusion.

- One review of 28 studies of the language and mathematics achievement of bilingual students concludes that schools can improve the achievement level of language-minority students through special programs, but argues that "The case for the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education is so weak that exclusive reliance on this instruction method is clearly not justified." The authors suggest that more attention be given to immersion programs (1).

- A second review surveys studies covering a wider range of variables, including students' attendance, self-concepts and attitudes toward their own culture, in addition to their language and mathematics achievement. Of the 66 findings encountered in three evaluations and 12 research studies which met the authors' criteria, only 1 percent were negative, 58 percent were positive, and 41 percent were neutral. The authors observe that a non-significant effect may be interpreted as a positive finding since it ". . . demonstrates the fact that learning in two languages does not interfere with a student's academic and cognitive performance" (16).

- A third review of 12 programs details the shortcomings of most evaluations, but notes that in several instances student achievement in English rose to or above national norms while students acquired skills in their native language. The author concludes: ". . . a quality bilingual education program can be effective in meeting the goals of equal educational opportunity for minority language children, and if it is not doing so, something is wrong with the program" (15).

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The High-Risk Secondary Student and Experiential, Competency-Based Education

Some students in secondary schools are generally recognized as "high-risk students." They have poor study habits, are not motivated to do the work necessary for becoming successful students, and show serious academic deficiencies and poor scholastic potential. These behaviors are not class specific, although they tend to be associated with working-class and poor minority youth.

According to the arguments of a growing body of researchers, an educator who wishes to improve the life chances of high-risk students should focus on exercising the capacities of individual students. This approach avoids blaming either the society or the students for their failure, and makes the schools accountable in areas where instruction has been shown to make a difference.

Characteristics of the High-Risk Student

Recently a number of educators have reconsidered the psychological variables underlying academic behavior. Their reformulations are relevant to high-risk students.

Cognitive Ability Increasingly, educational researchers are considering problem solving and inquiry as cognitive abilities important to achievement. Both have psychological and behavioral dimensions. They describe the individual in action, and tap that element of intelligence that Cattell (1971) has called "adaptability to new environments." Curriculum directed at problem-solving and inquiry has also begun to be designed. This new curriculum is often called competency-based education because it attempts to identify and work closely with the competencies necessary to the pursuit of knowledge. Evidence indicates that high-risk students perform better, get higher grades, and persist longer in school when exposed to competency-based, experiential modes of learning.

Task Motivation This is a task-specific attitude (not a personality trait) which has been shown to be connected to achievement. For task motivation to occur, a coherent rationale intrinsic to the task is required as a stimulus. The task must be understood both as related to a future goal and as allowing for new goals and destinations to emerge. This means that students must be made conscious of their abilities, interests, values, and points of view, and the academic endeavor must be shown to be capable of broadening them and leading towards a more coherent, powerful, and healthy future. Viewing motivation as task specific is particularly important in designing curriculum for the high-risk student.

Cultural Aspiration This is the identification that students have with their ethnicity, and includes their desire to conserve or improve their culture. Cultural aspiration affects the value placed on educational achievement as well as how much schooling the individual wishes to complete. Generally, education has become increasingly important to Blacks and Hispanics over the past decade, and two practices can make it more harmonious with their cultural aspirations: the involvement of parents and community leaders in educational decision making, and the inclusion of minority cultural concerns in the academic curriculum.

Task Performance This is the aspect of achievement acquired simply by practice in performing tasks. For example, defining problems and then solving them through self-directed, informed experience is a crucial skill that can only be gained through practice. Unfortunately, most school work is confined to activities which place students in a responsive rather than an initiatory mode of activity. Thus low- and high-risk students have much to gain when the curriculum is designed to include task performance.

Locus of Control As educators have focused more on the effects of emotions on academic performance, they have come to appreciate the importance of this psychological variable. A sense of fate control may be furthered by exposing students to opportunities for demonstrating to themselves that they can complete tasks, that these tasks are well done, and that the tasks have consequences for others. Experiential education, which stresses task completion and its consequences, is particularly useful for high-risk students, whose sense of control over their fate is generally low.

Arguments against Special Programs for High-Risk Students

There are strong arguments against special treatment for high-risk students, despite the apparent efficiency of tracks, ability groupings, and other special programs. Some investigators argue that much of the initial gains reported for special programs can be attributed to the Hawthorne Effect (people in new or short-term experimental situations do better because of the special attention). Tracking into either totally vocational or academic sequences also ignores the balance of intellectual and practical experiences that every student needs. Often stigmatizing and isolating, special programs tend to foster "learned helplessness," and increase the likelihood of academic failure and alienation. Finally, the end result of separating students by academic capabilities is a widening distance between social groups.

Arguments for a Shift in Focus in Curriculum for All Students

Although high-risk students are generally less skilled than regular students, and the amount of exercise they need in any one skill varies, they demand exercise in the same range of skills as all students. Like all students, they should be taught through

methods that use their practical and empirical skills.

Reasoning and communication, two skill areas that high-risk students need, are currently not being taught systematically in the general secondary curriculum.

Reasoning This most critical dimension of academic work includes such capacities as classifying and comparing, synthesizing, judging, evaluating, and making decisions. Individualized, programmed curricula are useful for teaching reasoning skills, because they allow the learners to exercise sequential abilities at their own pace. Among the many materials available are: *Making Judgments* (Thomas 1974), a programmed curriculum for middle school; *Learning Objectives for Individualized Instruction* (Westinghouse Learning Corporation 1975), which covers several discipline areas; *Selected Items for the Testing of Study Skills and Critical Thinking* (Morse et al. 1971); *Creative Analysis* (Upton et al. 1978); and *Intelligence Can Be Taught* (Whimbey 1980).

Evaluations of reasoning ability at the secondary level can be done with such tests as the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (Watson and Glaser 1980) and the Cornell Critical Thinking Text, Level X (Hoepfner et al. 1972).

Communication This broad area, where deficits are most conspicuous among high-risk students, includes the ability to receive or transmit oral, written, or mathematical information. For these skills, there is only superficial agreement about what is to be taught, when, and how.

Most educators agree that teaching mathematics is most important, followed by reading; although students are judged indirectly on their speaking ability and capacity to receive oral information, speaking and listening are largely ignored in the curriculum. (An effective material for developing listening skills is *The Relevance of Listening* (Sartain 1975), which develops this skill beyond the level of many college students.)

A variety of instructional methods and materials have been developed, but there is little empirical evidence for their relative effectiveness. Learning laboratories may help in improving instruction in the basic skills, but they and other available communications materials should be carefully planned and integrated into the general curriculum to be effective.

Successful Instruction Methods with High-Risk Students

Traditional lecture and discussion formats appear to be less effective with high-risk than with traditional students. The instructional methods which prove most successful with high-risk students are those which allow them (and their instructors) to monitor progress, which provide frequent reinforcement for work done properly, and which allow students to ask for help without humiliating themselves.

Individualized Instruction Techniques useful with high- and often low-risk students include individualized instruction (the wealth of material available here is reviewed regularly in *One to One*, the Journal of the International Congress of Individualized Instruction), tutorials, continuous progress instruction, programmed instruction, computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and computer-managed instruction (CMI).

Interdisciplinary, Inquiry-Based Learning High-risk students, especially, must be given access to an interdisciplinary, inquiry-based curriculum which links the learning of cultural ideas and values and the exercise of skills to the immediate interests of their lives. Useful curriculum guides for interdisciplinary, inquiry based learning include the Oregon School District Course Goal Project (1973), and the Westinghouse Learning Corporation's *Learning Objectives for Individual Instruction* (1975). Evaluation can be guided by Blum and Spangehl (1979) or Winter (1979).

Community-Based Learning High-risk students, should be helped to participate actively in the issues and problems that surround their home and community. Community-based learning situations, if carefully constructed and articulated, encourage the intellectual strengths of these students by providing tangible problems, situations that are solvable inductively, and projects that demand physical and visual command.

Career Education Work should be integrated into the curriculum in a carefully supervised work-study combination. No student should be given a vocational major, but *all* students should have opportunities to explore careers at worksites.

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Developing Non-Biased Criteria for Mainstreaming Minority Students

On November 29, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law The Education for All Handicapped Children's Act. Public law 94-142, often referred to as providing "comprehensive civil rights" for handicapped students, guarantees the rights of equal educational opportunity to all individuals with handicapping conditions.

Growing out of the troublesome history of assessment, especially concerning minority student intelligence, PL 94-142 stipulates that testing and evaluation materials used to place handicapped students must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory. The regulations implementing PL 94-142 require that: (1) school personnel draw upon assessment from a variety of nondiscriminatory sources; (2) evaluation and assessment materials be validated for the specific educational purposes for which they are used, rather than for a single general intelligence quotient; (3) placement decisions be made by a multidisciplinary team; (4) the rights of the children be protected by due process.

In order to assure "a free appropriate public education," the law further requires that "to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children...are educated with children who are not handicapped" (PL 94-142). This legal concept, known and referred to as the "doctrine of least restrictive alternative" has opened the way for "mainstreaming," although this term is not used in the law. PL 94-142 argues that handicapped children have the civil right to be in regular classes insofar as the nature and severity of their handicap can be treated with the use of supplemental aids and services. For children whose assessment indicates some form of special programming, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are mandated.

Another set of legislative safeguards overlaps with the guarantees set forth in PL 94-142. Enacted through the legislative vehicle of PL 93-112, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1973, the basic civil rights provision for terminating discrimination against America's handicapped citizens, is known as Section 504. Because Section 504 applies to all handicapped Americans regardless of age, it covers all handicapped children with respect to their public education "both from the standpoint of the guarantee of an appropriate special education and from the standpoint of sheer regular program accessibility." Like PL 94-142, Section 504 reaffirms the doctrine of a least restrictive environment by mandating that all recipients of federal financial assistance "shall educate, or shall provide for the education of, each qualified handicapped person in its jurisdiction with persons who are not handicapped to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the handicapped person" [Sec. 84.34(a)].

The Problem of Minorities and "Special Education"

Several studies have documented that minorities are placed in special education classes, particularly Educable Mentally Regarded (EMR) classes, far out of proportion to their numbers in the schools. The funneling of minorities into largely racially and ethnically segregated special education classes has been a common strategy for minimizing the effects of legal desegregation. Moreover, as discovered by the 1970 Fleischman Commission, less than 10% of all students placed in special education classes are returned to regular classes, partly because evaluations are infrequently conducted.

Testing itself has been seen as preserving the socioeconomic status quo through serving a gate-keeping function. Since some states have not had a uniform IQ score cutoff for EMR placement, youngsters with a wide range of scores—some extending high into the 80's—have been placed in these classes.

There is also the problem of teacher attitudes and expectations and their effects on minority children's growth and achievement. Behavior, not cognitive capacity, is often the crucial variable leading to a child's special placement. Racial and ethnic bias in discipline, referrals, interpretation of student behavior, and assumptions about potential for academic achievement are all part of the complex process that leads to a largely segregated system of special education classes. In fact, biased placement often has its roots at the point of referral long before any test data are generated, and test data may be collected to reinforce a decision that has already been made.

Finally, it is clear that placement in a special education class carries a stigma, and for minority students who already suffer from the stigma of ethnicity and race, this placement has a doubly debilitating effect. Recent studies of students taken out of EMR classes indicate that achievement and self-esteem are immediately raised.

Alternatives in Testing Minority Students

- Perhaps the simplest response by a school district to the challenge to offer the "least restrictive alternatives" to its students is to lower the cutoff score on existing standardized tests. This results in an immediate declassification of minorities and places them in transitional programs and regular classes. Although this strategy reduces the absolute numbers of all EMR or other special education students, white or black, it does not deal specifically with the biases that have sent large proportions of minorities into these classes in the first place.
- A second response is to make test users more aware of the potential for errors of interpretation. This may also include modi-

fying the structure, procedure, and test-taking situations of existing tests as well as helping testers to understand variables extraneous to test content that may contaminate the scores obtained by minority children.

- A third response is to bolster and supplement the scores from traditional intelligence tests with measures of the students' environment. Implicit in this strategy, however, is a deficit model which focuses on enrichment to compensate for an "impoverished" environment.
- A fourth response calls for a "pluralistic socio-cultural" perspective on testing. Although testers use standardized measures of IQ, they only compare the intelligence of any student in relation to others of similar backgrounds. The System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA) developed by Mercer is an example. SOMPA measures a diversified IQ and adaptive behavior and is based on multicultural scales and culturally pluralistic norms.
- A fifth response is to depart from traditional testing and to develop new measures consistent with the special language characteristics and experiences of minority students. This strategy does not follow the deficit model; instead, it satisfies the need to discern the logic of minority children's responses in the context of their linguistic and socio-cultural milieu.
- Finally, a sixth response brings together several schools of thought and theories on the measurement and education of minorities. It calls for description and prescription, rather than selection and prediction. Several researchers recommend instructionally related diagnostic tests that have direct implications for academically relevant skills, cognitive processing skills, adaptive and motivational skills, or physical problems that hamper learning. Existing tests are used, but they are directed toward eliciting skills and competencies that must be tapped if students with a wide variety of learning styles are to be given an equal educational opportunity. An example of such a test is the Program Assessment/Pupil Instruction System (PAPI), which uses several Piagetian instruments as a basis for developing a diagnostic/prescriptive procedure. Another example is the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) by Reuven Feuerstein and his collaborators: by focusing on the learning process, the test seeks to assess the examinee's potential for learning, the modality in which the best learning takes place, and the amount and kind of investment needed to induce successful performance. Finally, a variety of criterion-referenced tests can be used.

Guidelines for Determining the Value of an Assessment System

Recognizing the biases and shortcomings of all existing assessment methods, several authors have proposed guidelines for evaluating these instruments as well as deciding how to use them. It has been maintained that all assessment methods should: 1) provide accurate information about the students' level and mode of functioning within the context of their cultural background and experience; 2) identify the specific educational needs of the individual students by focusing on the assets and strengths which can form the foundation of new skills rather than on "inferred intellectual deficits"; and 3) constitute an ongoing rather than a static process. Tucker offers a guideline of 19 steps for assuring unbiased placement. Finally, the professional, multidisciplinary team using several criteria is a strategy to prevent misjudgment.

The following questions, proposed by the Region 9 Task Force on Non-Biased Assessment, should be asked by examiners before administering a test:

1. Am I testing this child simply because I've always used tests in my assessment procedure?
2. Am I administering a particular test simply because it is part of the BATTERY?
3. Am I administering a test because I have been directed to do so by the administration?
4. Does the instrument I've chosen include persons in the standardization sample from the child's cultural group?
5. Are subgroup scores reported in the manual?
6. Were there large enough numbers on this child's cultural group in the test sample for me to have any reliance on the norms?
7. Does the instrument I have selected assume a universal set of experiences for all children?
8. Does the instrument contain illustrations that are misleading and/or outdated?
9. Does the instrument employ vocabulary that is colloquial, regional, and/or archaic?
10. Do I understand the theoretical basis of the instrument?
11. Will this instrument easily assist in delineating a recommended course of action to benefit this child?
12. Have I reviewed current literature regarding this instrument?
13. Have I reviewed current research related to potential cultural influences on test results?

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